

The University of Chicago

UNIFIED CONTROL OF STATE
SUPPORTED HIGHER EDUCATION
IN GEORGIA

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SEPTEMBER, 1945

By
NORMAN BURNS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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The Nature and Scope of the Problem

State supported higher education in the United States has in general developed in a haphazard manner. Legislative log-rolling and special local interests have frequently resulted in the establishment and continued maintenance of too large a number of institutions for the best interests of the state. Not uncommonly the location of an institution has been determined with more regard to the pressures of local interests than to the needs of the state as a whole. The absence of effective machinery for coordinating the efforts of a state in the field of higher education has in many instances resulted in keen competition among the tax supported institutions with the inevitable result of wasteful expansion and duplication of facilities.

In some states efforts were made early in the development of state supported higher education to provide for some measure of coordination, but these early efforts came to little. However, as state systems of higher education expanded, the results of the failure to provide for coordination in their development became more and more apparent. In an effort to correct the mistakes of the past a growing number of states have been moving in the direction of centralization of control of state supported higher education. In three states, Florida, Idaho, and Montana, centralization has been carried to the point where all levels of

publicly supported education have been brought under the control of a single board. Nine other states, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, and South Dakota, each of which maintains more than one higher institution, have placed all state supported higher education under a single board. Six of the states with a single board have carried the process of centralization one step further by providing the board with an executive officer. These states are Georgia, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Oregon.

The state of Georgia is one of the leaders in the movement toward centralization of control of higher education. Its experience under unified control should be of interest to other states faced with the problems incident to an uncoordinated system of higher institutions. In this paper the writer attempts to explore and evaluate certain of the changes which have taken place in state controlled higher education in Georgia since the passage of the Reorganization Act in 1931. No attempt has been made to include in this study all phases of the program of state supported higher education in Georgia. The report on the survey of the University System of Georgia made in 1933 and the report on the re-survey in 1943 provide this more extensive type of analysis. This investigation was limited to a more intensive analysis than is provided by the survey report of the changes which have taken place in the government and administration of the system, in the financing of the system, and in certain aspects of the instructional program since the reorganization. Thus, to some extent, it serves as a supplement to the survey reports. However, the writer's primary concern is with the extent to which improvements,

as measured by the changes in the items selected for study, have been effected under unified control. Such a study does, of course, lead to suggestions for improvement, but it differs from a survey in that recommendations as to desirable changes are a consideration of secondary importance.

Consideration is given in this study only to the institutions for white students. In the states which segregate the races, the education of Negroes is a special problem of such importance as to require more exhaustive treatment than could be accorded it in this paper.

No attention has been given in this study to the problems still faced by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia in bringing about improved coordination of the State's efforts in the areas of resident instruction in agriculture, agricultural extension, and agricultural research. Recommendations as to organizational changes through which the needed coordination could be effected were made in the first survey report and were repeated in the report of the re-survey.

The changes which have taken place in the items investigated in this study, and the conclusions to be drawn from the evidence assembled as to the extent to which improvements have been effected in Georgia's program of higher education since the time of its reorganization are summarized below.

The Government of Higher Education in Georgia

In unifying the control of its institutions of higher education under the Board of Regents, the State of Georgia took a long step forward in the direction of more effective administration of the State's program of higher education. The adoption

of this plan of control set the stage for a coordinated development of higher education along the lines of the best interests of the entire State--a development difficult, if not impossible of achievement under the conditions which prevailed prior to the passage of the Reorganization Act of 1931. The establishment of a single board of control to replace the autonomous and competing boards of individual state controlled institutions was, however, only a first step toward effective coordination of the State's efforts in the field of higher education; it would not, of itself, result in such coordination. Of first importance in the attainment of the objectives of unified control, once the concept of unified control had been accepted, was the establishment of sound procedures through which the Board of Regents would carry on its activities.

The pattern of control which was developed during the first decade following the reorganization served, in some respects, to hamper the Board of Regents in the effective administration of the University System. To some extent the Board itself was responsible for the unsatisfactory elements in the procedural pattern, but, to a greater extent, the fault lay with the legal provisions for the control of higher education. In the first place, the Board was dominated by the Governor who held his position of dominance by virtue of his membership on the Board and his power to appoint a majority of the members of the Board if he served two consecutive terms. The Governor's power was further enhanced by the adoption, at the time the executive branch of the government was reorganized, of the executive budget plan. This move, together with other moves toward centralization of author-

ity and responsibility in the hands of the Governor, is in accord with generally accepted principles of public administration. However, the executive budget plan, as it operated in Georgia, gave the Governor wider powers over the financing of the spending agencies than were necessary for effective over-all administration of the state government. The dominant position occupied by the Governor in the government of higher education, aggravated by the Board's acceptance of gubernatorial domination even beyond the limits permitted by the law, laid the basis for the crisis in the affairs of the University System reached in 1941. At that time Georgia's state controlled higher institutions lost their accreditation because of political interference.

In 1943 legislative action designed to remedy the situation was taken. The Board of Regents was reconstituted to exclude the Governor as a member of the Board. The term of office of the members was lengthened from six to seven years. It is still possible for one Governor to appoint a majority of the Regents, but his opportunity to dominate the Board through the appointive power is lessened since he cannot appoint a majority of the members until his last year in office.

In a further effort to protect the University System from political interference the Board of Regents was made a constitutional agency in 1943, and certain details such as the composition of the Board, the method of selection of the members, and the term of office were written into the constitution. This action does afford some protection for the University System against hasty and

ill-considered legislation. However, in doing so, it tends to fix permanently the organization of the Board of Regents, and makes it more difficult to effect desirable changes.

The legislature also passed legislation in 1943 which transferred the actual responsibility for the preparation and execution of the budget of the State from the Governor to a Finance Commission. In view of the unfortunate experiences through which the State had recently passed, it is not surprising that such action should be taken. Nevertheless, in depriving the chief executive of the responsibility for the preparation and administration of the budget, this legislation has probably weakened the budgetary machinery. It should have been possible to safeguard the degree of independent action which the departments should have and still permit the Governor to exercise the desirable degree of supervision over the total financial operations of the executive branches of the government.

Within the framework of the law, the Board of Regents itself had the responsibility for setting up the procedures through which it would carry on its activities. In certain respects the procedures which grew up during the decade following the establishment of the Board of Regents violated sound administrative practice, and thus operated to impair the effectiveness of the government of the University System.

The Board of Regents at the time of its establishment wisely recognized that it would require the services of an executive officer if it were to operate most effectively in carrying

out a task of such magnitude as the government of the University System. The office of Chancellor was created, and the definition of the duties and powers of the Chancellor set forth in the By-Laws of the Board of Regents gave to the Chancellor wide powers in carrying out his responsibilities as the executive officer of the Board. The Board, however, operated largely through committees. These committees, as is so often the case, displayed a tendency to assume administrative functions which properly should have been exercised by the Chancellor. Another undesirable outgrowth of the committee form of organization was that the Board came to rely on its committees, rather than its executive officer, for the performance of investigatory functions and for recommendations relative to the technical aspects and details of operation of the University System.

The revised By-Laws of the Board of Regents recently adopted represent an attempt to improve the plan of operation of the Board. The duties of the standing committees have been rewritten to give formal recognition to the need of the Board and its committees for the professional assistance of the administrative staff. Unless implemented in some fashion, such recognition of a need will be, however, of little practical value. There has never been full realization on the part of those concerned with the government and administration of the University System of the importance of maintaining a central office staff of professionally competent persons. The Chancellor's office should be organized to conduct investigations, assemble data on all aspects of the work of the University System, and report its findings in a form permitting ready interpretation if the Regents are to be in possession of the facts necessary for the most effective government of the University System. At present it is not so organized.

In any sweeping reorganization, such as that which took place in the provisions for the government of higher education in Georgia, mistakes are inevitable. In Georgia, however, a progressive attitude has been taken in the matter of the correction of the mistakes which have been made. Though much remains to be done, it is fair to say that definite progress has been made in improving the organization for the government and administration of the University System.

The Financing of Higher Education in Georgia

Expenditures.--The studies which have been made indicate that a close relationship exists between the quality of a program of higher education and the expenditures per student for educational and general purposes. It is therefore of considerable significance that expenditures in state controlled higher institutions in Georgia failed to keep pace with increasing enrollments during the decade following the inception of the plan of unified control. In this regard Georgia does not compare favorably with some of the neighboring states in which there was, during the period under consideration, no general reorganization of state controlled higher education. The states used in the comparison are Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The Committee on Revision of Standards of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools found that the effectiveness of educational and general expenditures varied with the size of the institutional enrollment and the scope of the program. In general, a larger expenditure per student is needed in a small institution than in a large institution to maintain a program of a given level of excellence. A junior college requires a smaller per student expenditure to maintain a program of a given level of excellence than is required in a senior college.

Corrective weightings were developed in the North Central Association study on revision of standards which, when applied to institutional expenditures, would equate for the factors of size of enrollments and scope of program. When allowance was made for differences between Georgia and the five states used for comparative purposes in size of institutional enrollments and scope of programs, it was found that Georgia was the only one of the six states in which educational and general expenditures did not increase at a more rapid rate than enrollments during the decade of the '30s. Georgia, it is clear, has not recognized the importance of increasing expenditures as a means of improving its program of higher education. In this respect it differs from the five states with which it was compared in this study.

Georgia has, under unified control, effected certain economies in its program of higher education which would result in more effective utilization of the funds expended for higher education. Notable among these economies is the reduction in the number of institutions offering senior college work. However, in failing to discontinue certain of the smaller institutions the Regents have neglected an important opportunity to economize without sacrificing service to the State.

Georgia has maintained, and continues to maintain, a larger total number of higher institutions and a larger number of small institutions than any of the five states with which it was compared in this study. Some of the consequences of the policy of maintaining a large number of small institutions are revealed by an analysis of the distribution of expenditures for various purposes in the institutions of different size. It was found, for one thing, that the small institutions in the University System spend proportionately more for administration and less

for instruction than the larger institutions. Since the instruction of students is the most directly productive function of a college, this means that expenditures in the small institutions are less effective than in the larger institutions--a conclusion which is in accord with the findings of the North Central Association study on the revision of standards. One conclusion stands out clearly from this phase of the study: the state system of higher education as now organized in Georgia requires larger expenditures to maintain a program of a given level of excellence than would be required if the system consisted of fewer and larger institutions.

Income.--Trends in income from state appropriations and from student fees, more than any other sources of income, reflect the policy pursued by a state in arranging for the support of its higher institutions. In this connection it is significant that the trends in Georgia since the time of the reorganization indicate an increasing dependence on income from student fees and a decreasing dependence on income from state and local governments. These trends also appear in some of the other states with which Georgia is compared in this study. However, Georgia's institutions by 1939-40 had come to depend to a greater extent on student fees and to a lesser extent on income from state and local governments than the state controlled institutions in the other five states with one exception. In 1931-32 income from student fees constituted a larger percentage of educational and general expenditures in two of the states than in Georgia, but in 1939-40 this percentage was larger in Georgia than in any of the other five states. In only one of the states in 1931-32 did income from state and local governments constitute a larger percentage of expenditures than in Georgia, but in 1939-40 this percentage

was smaller in Georgia than in any of the other states with the exception of Virginia. It was also found that the failure of income from state and local governments to keep pace with increasing enrollments during the period 1931-32 through 1939-40 was more marked in Georgia than in any of the other states included in the comparative analysis.

The extent to which state controlled higher education is to rely on income from students for its support rather than on governmental appropriations is a matter of policy for each state to decide. However, the determination of policy in this regard should be made with full awareness of the fact that the democratization of higher education is impeded to the extent that reliance is placed on student fees as a source of support. The trend in Georgia does not represent the policy of the Board of Regents; it is rather a result of the insufficiency of the funds provided by the State for the support of higher education. The Regents have consistently held the view that the University System should be devoted to the service of all the youth of the State, and that increased student charges interfere with the attainment of that objective.

Change in the value of physical plant.--In Georgia the percentage increase in the book value of the physical plant of the state controlled higher institutions between 1931-32 and 1939-40 was approximately equal to the percentage increase in enrollments. In each of the five states with which Georgia is compared the percentage increase in the value of physical plant during the period exceeded the percentage increase in enrollments. These findings are in accord with those reported in connection with the analyses of trends in expenditures and in income, namely, that Georgia has failed to keep pace with some of its neighbors

in the matter of making provision for the support of state controlled higher education.

The reason for this is not clear. Possibly the legislature has interpreted the economies claimed for unified control to mean lower cost to the State rather than more effective utilization of the State's contribution to the support of higher education. Perhaps other needs have, in the minds of the legislators, come to assume positions of greater relative importance. Perhaps there is a feeling that the Regents could and should effect further economies. One thing is clear: Georgia was not in 1939-40 making the effort to support higher education which it had made just prior to the reorganization. The measure of effort used in this study was the relationship between per capita contributions of state and local governments to the support of higher education and per capita income. In 1931-32 per capita contributions of state and local governments to higher education were .34 per cent of per capita income; in 1939-40 the percentage was .14. On this measure of effort Georgia ranked highest among the six states in 1931-32; in 1939-40 it ranked lowest in the group.

Some Aspects of the Instructional Program

Faculty salaries.--One of the most important indexes of the quality of an educational program is the average salary paid to members of the faculty. On this measure of excellence the University System of Georgia makes a poor showing. The evidence assembled in this study clearly indicates, not only that the general level of faculty salaries in the University System is low, but also that nothing has been accomplished since the inception of unified control in the way of improving the situation. In fact, in some respects the situation was even more unsatisfactory in 1940-41 than it had been ten years earlier. Particularly is this

true in the case of the salaries paid in the upper faculty ranks at the University of Georgia and at the School of Technology.

In the senior colleges of the University System the level of salaries is so low as to place the institutions at a real disadvantage in competing for scholars and teachers of eminence. At some of the junior colleges salaries are so low as to make it difficult for those institutions to compete even with the better high schools in the State.

Though there may be other factors involved, it is clear that the low level of salaries is closely related to the inadequate support from the State. The Board of Regents has on a number of occasions pointed to the need for increased faculty salaries.

Class size.--In general, it may be said that the percentage of small classes in the institutions of the University System is not excessive, and that, in this respect, the University System was being operated more economically in 1940 than in 1932.

Organization of curricula in the four-year colleges.--In any institution or system of institutions the effectiveness of the instructional program is closely related to the efficiency with which the subject-matter offerings are organized. No attempt was made in this study to provide a complete analysis of curricula. The content of individual courses and the content of programs of study are matters which lie beyond the scope of this paper. Our major concern here is with the inefficiencies which result from curricular over-expansion, both in the individual institutions of the University System and in the System as a whole. So far as the University System as a whole is concerned, over-expansion involves unnecessary, and hence uneconomical duplication of curricula, as well as the maintenance of institutions which do not make a contribution to the educational welfare of the State commensurate with

their cost.

Under unified control important steps have been taken in Georgia toward a more economical and efficient organization of the curricula of the University System. All work in engineering, except agricultural engineering, has been concentrated at the School of Technology. The program in veterinary medicine, which represented an unwise use of the limited funds available for higher education in Georgia, has been discontinued. The wasteful duplication of facilities for the preparation of teachers in Athens has been eliminated. The School of Commerce formerly maintained by the School of Technology has been consolidated with the work in commerce offered at the University. Three extremely weak senior college units, North Georgia College, Georgia State College for Men, and Bowden State College, have been discontinued.

There has been, on the other hand, a tendency toward an over-expansion of course offerings in certain fields at the University of Georgia, at Georgia State College for Women, and, to some extent, at Georgia Teachers College. The multiplication of courses results in narrowly defined, highly specialized courses for which the undergraduate has neither the need nor the preparation, and also tends to result in an undue proportion of small classes. It is true that at the University of Georgia many of the senior division courses may be taken for graduate as well as undergraduate credit. The University is justified, therefore, in offering some highly specialized courses on the senior division level. However, its graduate enrollment is small, except in the summer session when it enrolls large numbers of in-service teachers on the graduate level. Since it is primarily an undergraduate institution, the University of Georgia would probably do well, except in the summer session, to give primary consideration to

the needs of undergraduate students in the organization of its senior college offerings. In some of the departments this would involve a reduction in the number of senior college courses, and broader subject-matter coverage and less intensive specialization in the individual courses.

In continuing to maintain Georgia State Womens College the Board of Regents is failing to utilize the limited funds at its disposal to the best advantage. That institution does not appear to be performing services of sufficient value to justify its continuance as a four-year institution. It offers no courses of study which are not available elsewhere in the University System. Its enrollment is so small, particularly on the senior college level, that its students could readily be absorbed, and, in all likelihood, more economically and effectively served by one of the larger units of the System.

The junior college.--Prior to the reorganization the state controlled four-year colleges in Georgia, in the main, looked upon their degree programs as four-year units. The idea of the horizontal division of the college program into the junior college and the senior college had not yet been accepted. This is not to say, however, that all the programs of these institutions were built on the basis of four years of study leading to a bachelor's degree. Some concessions were made to the vocational needs of students who were unwilling or unable to complete a four-year program.

A limited amount of terminal vocational work was also available in the separate junior colleges. However, the general conclusion to be drawn from an analysis of the catalogues is that, prior to the reorganization, the state controlled higher institutions in Georgia, both junior colleges and degree-granting insti-

tutions, were primarily concerned with programs of study leading to a degree. There was no evidence of any interest in terminal general education.

The Board of Regents, set up at the time of the reorganization, accepted in principle the recommendation of the first survey report that the junior college period be devoted primarily to a program of general education which would, except for the School of Technology, be uniform throughout the System, and which would, for most of the students, be terminal. To accomplish the purposes of general education the Regents adopted the device of a core curriculum of System-wide survey courses. However, the principle accepted was only in part translated into practice. Requirements for specialization have continued to be projected into the junior college period to such an extent, particularly in the professional programs, as in some cases to require the substitution of introductory or specialized courses for some of the survey courses. Furthermore, there is some evidence of a tendency toward still further departure from the concept of a period of general education extending through the sophomore year.

The plan for divisional organization of the curriculum, which contemplates broader groupings of subject matter, has been accepted in theory in the University System. Had this plan actually been put into practice it would probably have reduced the pressure toward the projection of specialized requirements into the junior college period. The department, however, has continued to be the dominant unit of organization in the senior colleges. It is probable that this fact also explains in part the over-expansion in subject-matter offerings which has taken place in some of the four-year units of the University System.

It is apparent from an analysis of the catalogue state-

ments and from conversations with administrative officers and faculty members that some recognition has been given in the University System to the other functions of the junior college since the reorganization, but that the major emphasis continues to lie on the preparatory function. Yet the evidence indicates that in these institutions, as elsewhere, the majority of the students terminate their formal education in the junior college period.

In the light of the available evidence it is probably fair to say that an important reason for the limited development of the junior college in Georgia along the lines best adapted to the needs of the majority of youth is to be found in the policy of the State regarding the control of the junior college. The Regents have not accepted the point of view that the junior college is logically an upward extension of locally controlled public education rather than a part of the system of higher education. That there are causal relationships between the type of control and certain of the inadequacies of the junior college in Georgia is apparent. In the first place, the state junior colleges in Georgia do not, as was contemplated, serve as regional institutions. In the second place, since they are looked upon as regional institutions, they are not well located with respect to centers of population. The location of these junior colleges in small towns operates to restrict the extent to which they can serve the young people of the State, not only in terms of numbers in attendance, but also in terms of scope of program. Junior colleges located in larger centers with their greater development of industrial and commercial interests would be faced with larger demands for vocational training and would be better able to provide these more costly programs. It is fair to assume that a policy of encouraging the establishment of local public junior

colleges in Georgia would be much more likely to result in the establishment of opportunities for junior college education in the larger population centers than does the policy of maintaining state junior colleges. Finally, the fact that the junior colleges in Georgia are articulated with higher institutions rather than the lower schools explains, at least in part, their preoccupation with the preparatory function.

